A tour in British North America and the United States, 1863

A TOUR IN BRITISH NORTH AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES 1863

A LECTURE DELIVERED TO THE YOUNG MENL'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION AT LISNASKEA

BY VISCOUNT CRICHTON

Erne, John Gerry Crichton, 4th earl of.

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A TOUR.

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Encouraged by the kind reception I met with on a former occasion, I again come forward, in the hope that I may contribute in some degree, however small, to the instruction, and, I may venture to add, to the amusement of the members of this Association, and the people of Lisnaskea in general. My subject, as on that occasion, so also on this, is history: for in times to come, when the records of the great struggle which is now tearing to its very foundations the huge empire on the other side of the Atlantic shall have been given to the world, the scenes I have witnessed, and the people whom I have met, will take their places among certainly not the least important passages in the history of mankind. In my

former lecture I gleaned my substance from written pages, the testimony A 2 4 of our best historians; in the present my own eyes and ears have been the chief agents I employed. I present you, then, on this occasion with the account of what I personally witnessed, what I heard, and what impressions were the result of my observations during an excursion of about four months, which I made last year to America.

In the placards announcing this lecture, the heading, which runs thus, “A Tour in British North America and the United States,” seems to be unnecessarily long; and I dare say it will have occurred to some of you that “America” would have been quite sufficient; but I had two reasons for adopting the line I have taken. First, because I thought that an account of a tour, with notices of the places I visited, and the scenes I witnessed, would be much more interesting and amusing than a dry disquisition on the causes, effects, and probable results of the American contest; and also, even had I been inclined to pursue such a course, I cannot but feel, in the face of so many fluctuations of fortune on both sides, how utterly incompetent I should be to express any opinion on results which hitherto generally have falsified the predictions and upset the calculations of persons much better qualified than I to express a judgment on such matters.

Bearing in mind these considerations, I trust you will agree with me that I have taken the line most likely to ensure the amusement and instruction of those present this evening; and should my efforts be fortunate 5 enough to gain your approbation, I shall feel more than repaid for my labours.

I must now ask you to imagine yourselves in my company in an express train on the London and North Western Railway, travelling at a rate, as I was destined soon to find out, at which in England alone express trains can go. It was a lovely night; not a breath of wind stirring; and a beautiful April moon shining on the fields made them look, as the train sped along, as if they were covered with snow. Everything looked propitious for the commencement of my voyage; but alas for the uncertainty of human hopes: I was awakened next morning in my room in the Adelphi Hotel, at Liverpool, where I had

gone to bed to snatch a few hours repose, by the howling of the wind in the chimney and the pattering of the rain against the windows: however, there was no help for it; so after a hasty breakfast I started in a perfect down-pour for the docks, where the tender was waiting to take us on board the Arabia, which, with steam up and blue-peter flying at the fore, we could discern lying a little distance up the Mersey. The transit was as uncomfortable a one as I ever experienced; and right glad was I when I found myself (having nearly lost half my baggage in the trans-shipment) standing on the deck of the good ship, which for the next fortnight was to be my home. As we were carrying the mails, no time was lost in getting under way, and at 10 a. m. precisely, we were steaming majestically out to sea, in 6 the teeth of a nor'-wester, which, as the sailors say, made you hold on by your eyelashes to the rigging, to prevent your teeth being blown down your throat. We were disappointed in our hopes of having the company of the Great Eastern: she had been advertised to sail on the same day as we did, but owing to some repairs not having been completed, she was unable to proceed to sea, and we passed her lying in the mud on the Birkenhead side of the river. The consequence was that from sixty to seventy people who had taken their passage in her came with us, and these, superadded to the already rather large complement we had on board, crowded the vessel to such an extent that, had it not been for the rough weather we encountered during the voyage, which confined the majority to their berths, elbow-room in the saloon during meals would have been, to say the least of it, decidedly limited. Thus was the proverb, which says that “It is an ill wind which blows nobody any good,” fully exemplified on this occasion; for although to most of my fellow passengers it blew all the miseries attendant upon sea-sickness, from me and a few others who were fortunate enough to enjoy immunity from that most dreadful of maladies, it bore away on its wings the annoyance attendant on the restricted use of the knife and fork when the appetites of the feeders are sharpened by the keen breezes of the Atlantic.

While we are now supposed to be steaming down the Irish Channel, en route for Cork, I will attempt to 7 describe to you our vessel, our fellow passengers, and our mode of living on board—

I dare say most of you have heard of the Cunard Packets, the finest line of ocean-going steamers in the world, and the Arabia was no exception to the rule, although from her extreme sharpness forward, and the great power of her engines, she was better adapted for a summer passage across the Atlantic, than for one at such a tempestuous time of the year: she was about 300 feet long, with flush decks, that is to say, decks raised above the main one, running the whole length of the ship from stem to stem. Between the paddle boxes was a raised bridge, on which the officer on duty took his stand, and never left it, no matter what the weather was, until relieved, which took place every four hours. The flush deck formed the roof of the saloon, which was on the main deck, abaft the paddle boxes, and below it again, in the hull proper, were the sleeping cabins, or state rooms, as they were called, a regular misnomer, seeing that they were not more than eight feet square, including two sleeping berths, within which limited space two human beings were expected to sleep, dress, and perform their ablutions.

The forward part of the vessel was mostly devoted to emigrants, 200 of whom Miss Burdett Coutts was sending out to Nova Scotia at her sole expense. I was unfortunate in not finding many congenial spirits among my fellow passengers, who were composed, for the most part, of Yankee captains returning to 8 America, having disposed of their ships and cargoes at Liverpool through fear of the Alabama and other Confederate rovers of the sea, or else commercial men belonging to Halifax and Boston, whose thoughts were so absorbed on matters of profit and loss as to leave me little prospect of conversation with them: a few miscellaneous characters, a German family, a Levantine ditto, a Jew, a Prussian, an unmistakable Paddy, and an ensign going out to join his regiment at Halifax, made up the party. The latter was my cabin companion, and a very nice one he would have been too, had he not unfortunately been addicted to the vice of sea-sickness, which

had such an effect upon him, that after leaving Queenstown, he did not appear on deck twice during the whole voyage.

The fare provided for us was excellent; breakfast from eight to nine; luncheon at twelve; dinner at four; tea at seven; supper at nine; all of which were admirably served up, with excellent attendance. The provisions were all kept in ice; meat, fish, vegetables, etc., each having a separate ice-house to itself—there was even a cow on board to supply milk for the passengers.

We will now suppose ourselves to have arrived at Queenstown, which we reached at four o'clock in the afternoon of Easter Sunday: and having embarked the mails and a few extra passengers, we left with all speed, and the head of our ship was soon pointing for America.

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For the first week of our voyage we were singularly unlucky in the weather; for seven days the Atlantic followed its usual course in the month of April, and was true to the traditions which affix to it, in that month, the character of violence and moody changes, from bad to worse, and back again. The wind was generally dead against us, and then the infelix Arabia with iron energy set to work, storming great mountains of waters, which rose above her like the side of a hill, crested with snow drifts; and, having gained the summit, and settled for an instant among the hissing sea horses, ran plunging down headlong to the encounter of another wave, and thus went battling on, with heart of fire and breath of flame, hour after hour. Sometimes, though very rarely, the wind was with us, and then the conduct of the ship, and the sensations of the passengers, were pretty much as they had been during the adverse breeze before, varied by the performance of a very wide yawning from side to side, and certain squashings of the paddle boxes into the yeasty waters, which now ran a race with us and each other, as if bent on chasing us down, and rolling their boarding parties, with foaming crests, down on our decks.

You may well imagine that time under such circumstances passed anything but agreeably; though, for my part, I had much less reason to complain than most of my fellow-passengers, for with the exception of a few qualms on the first day of the voyage, I enjoyed complete immunity from sea-sickness; this I, in some 10 degree attributed to my previous training on the waters of our own lake. Open-air exercise, however, was almost entirely out of the question, as the waves swept the ship from stem to stem, obliging us poor landsmen to keep under cover, and content ourselves with listening to the combat between the wind and waves, or with the perusal of such books as we had chanced to bring with us. Whilst thus snugly housed, we could not but think of the officers and men on watch, exposed to the fury of the storm, and I thoroughly felt the application of those beautiful lines:

“Whilst the skilled sailor o'er the helm inclined, Lists to the changeful storm, And as he plies his wakeful task, He oft bethinks him sad Of wife and home and chubby lad, And the half-strangled tear Bedews his watering eye.”

On referring to my journal, I find that during the first week, with the exception of shipping some heavy seas, one of which nearly washed the officers on duty overboard, no incident of any note occurred; but on the following Monday, the sea and wind having abated, an iceberg hove in sight, to the great delight of the passengers, at least of those who were sufficiently recovered to be capable of experiencing such emotions. It was about three miles off when we first saw it, and at that distance, it looked like a mountain of snow, but as we approached it, the colour changed to a beautiful light sea-green, powdered with white, which 11 latter ingredient is, I believe, caused by the melting of the snow. The sailors informed us that it was extremely unusual to find bergs so far east at that time of year. About four, p.m., of the same day, the fog came on—a regular Newfoundland one—steeping everything in yellow clouds, impervious to light and almost to sound. The mists seemed, by their very weight and density to make the ocean dumb, and only a huge silent fog swell, which seemed almost supernatural in its mute undulations, gave evidence that

the ship was really at sea. Every mast and spar was hidden, fog-lights were useless, even at a few yards off they only shone with a dim thick yellow glare, which might be a mile off or a yard for anything one could distinguish. The fog hung, in fact, on everything like a pall, and seemed to check sight and noise, and even motion; the very sea itself was blinded out by this wet, dim, choking atmosphere, and worse than all, it penetrated into every part of the ship, filling the cabins, and making the berths and everything in them damp and uncomfortable. We were steaming along with the look-outs doubled, and an officer on the bridge, sounding the melancholy fog whistle at intervals, when all on a sudden the look-out forward sung out, “Iceberg on the ‘starboard bow,’” “Hard a port,” shouted the officer, and the next moment a huge iceberg loomed out of the mist, towering above the masts, so close to us that we could almost have thrown a stone on it, and we could hear the noise the 12 waves made dashing among the caverns in its side. Another moment and it passed into the obscurity from which it had emerged, but it was a narrow escape; for had the officer lost his head, and given the wrong order, we should have run right against it, and must have all gone to the bottom, as we were going at full speed at the time. After this the engines were slowed, and we went at quarter speed all night, much to the relief of the passengers. Thus, as on this day I had an opportunity of witnessing the magnitude, form, and colour of the iceberg in noon daylight, as it drifted by an under-current towards the tropical seas, so also I had a deliverance from the dangers which the iceberg throws in the way of mariners, a deliverance solely owing to a merciful interposition of Providence. The mariner's skill can in no way protect him from these dangers: his chart points out the sunken shoal or covered rock, but the iceberg no chart can reveal. Our deliverance from this imminent danger was thankfully acknowledged, and it brought to my mind the sailor's verse about

“The sweet little cherub that sits up aloft, Watching over the life of poor Jack.”

The following information respecting the origin, formation, and birth-place of the iceberg, gleaned from the pages of Brewster's Encyclopedia may perhaps be interesting to my hearers. It is there noticed that the renowned navigator, Scoresby, saw seven of them,

300 13 feet in height, in a valley of Spitzbergen. In that intensely cold region, uninhabited by man, we learn that there is a summer and a winter line of ice, the latter protruding into the ocean far beyond the former. On the breaking up of the frozen sea in the spring, the ice-floes, as they are called, are carried away by the current to the West of Greenland, and are drifted down Davis's Straits, being about three miles long by two broad. But these, he tells us, are not the icebergs he saw in the Spitzbergen valley. They are formed of congealed snow, which covers the land all over to an immense depth, to the very brink of the sea. In summer the base of the part adjoining the shore loses its hold of the land, and such is the depth of the ice mountain that the part unsupported becomes rift or torn off from the rest, and is precipitated into the sea with a noise unequalled by the loudest thunder, the report being heard at a distance of several leagues, causing a commotion said by those who have witnessed it, to be almost indescribable. You will thus observe that the difference between ice-floes, or fields, as they are commonly called by sailors, and icebergs is this: that the former are formed of frozen sea-water, while the latter consist of congealed snow or fresh water; when I add that only one-seventh of these bergs appear above water, the remaining six-sevenths being submerged, you will be able to form some idea of the magnitude of these icy wonders of the deep.

The following day we passed two smaller bergs, and 14 a quantity of floating ice, which, added to the intense cold, indicated the vicinity of large fields; but on the next day the weather cleared, and we had a glorious run of 300 miles; during dinner our ears were greeted by the joyous cry of “Land ho,” and rushing on deck, I got my first view of America. The coast line formed a sort of inverted semi-circle, Halifax harbour being in the centre. The land was low, but rather pretty: granite cliffs with moorland and forest stretching away behind, interspersed with occasional patches of vegetation; the snow was still lying in the hollows, and as we approached the pier we found the people had not left off their winter dresses. The town looks exceedingly well from the sea, being built on the slope of a hill on the left hand side as you go up the harbour, and surmounted by the citadel, an enormously strong place, called the Gibraltar of America: however, in this case as in

many others, distance lends enchantment to the view, as on landing we found the houses ill built and tumbling to decay, with their doors and windows mostly crowded with seedy-looking squalid inhabitants, who lounge about as if they had very little to do, and were too lazy to do even that. Further up, towards what may be termed the more fashionable quarter of the town, the streets are better and wider, though always as hilly, as dusty, and as stony, as all towns in the provinces seem bound to be. Still the whole place has an air of antiquated sleepiness about it, a kind of wooden imitation of the old cathedral towns in England, where 15 each rickety house seems as if it only nudged its neighbour to keep still. Some of the public buildings are, however, well built, and handsome, and, I doubt not, when the resources of the colony have been more fully developed, the town will assume an appearance more worthy of its situation.

The glory of Halifax, however, is its magnificent harbour, the celebrated Bedford Basin, the finest probably on the face of the earth. I regretted much that our short stay (for we were only six hours here, discharging cargo and taking in coals,) prevented me from taking more than a cursory view of this noble sheet of water, ten miles long by seven broad, free from almost any rocks, with a great depth of water all over it. Except at its narrow entrance it is completely land-locked and shut in by picturesque semi-mountainous hills, which, clad with red and white pine to their very summit, make the whole scenery of the lake as rich and solemn as can well be imagined. To say that the whole navy of Britain could ride here in safety gives but a poor idea of the immense capacity of this harbour. Not only the Royal Navy, but all the shipping of Liverpool besides, could be accommodated in it with ease, and with room to spare. The heights around it, too, are so steep and rugged, that very little trouble and expense would convert them into such a series of impregnable fortresses as might defy all the armies and navies of the world to assail.

Leaving Halifax at midnight, we arrived at Boston 16 harbour on the morning of the 18th, after a quick run of thirty-six hours; but owing to a thick fog we were obliged to keep circling round and round for some time, firing guns at intervals for a pilot. The fog lifted about mid day, and we found ourselves abreast of Plymouth, a town famous in the annals

of America as the place where the Pilgrim Fathers landed from the May-flower in the end of the seventeenth century; an event which Mrs. Hemans has immortalized in one of her most beautiful ballads.

“The breaking waves dashed high On a stern and rock bound coast, And the woods against a stormy sky Their giant branches tost;

And the weary night hung dark The hills and waters o'er, When a band of exiles moored their bark On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes They, the true hearted, came; Not with the roll of the stirring drums And the trumpet that speaks of fame;

Not as the flying come, In silence and in fear, They shook the depths of the desert gloom With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sung; And the stars heard, and the sea, And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rung To the anthem of the free.

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The ocean eagle soared From his nest by the white waves foam, And the rocking pines of the forest roared— This was their welcome home.

We soon found ourselves steaming up the harbour, which is a very large one, the distance from its entrance to the town, which stands at the head, being about seven miles.

The channel is very intricate and tortuous, winding among the vast number of islands which cover the bay. Some of these are fortified, and on one stands Fort Warren, where you may remember Messrs. Mason and Slidell were confined at the time of the Trent affair. Arriving at the pier, I found my brother and and some other officers of the Guards, who had come up from New York to meet me, and having got my luggage through the ordeal of the custom-house, I drove to the hotel to deposit my traps, and then proceeded

to see as much of the town as the remains of daylight would permit. The principal object of interest to an Englishman is Bunker's Hill, where a tall and rather ugly obelisk looms over the city, marking the place where we were defeated in the war of independence. Some of the remains of the American entrenchments are still to be seen, and as I surveyed the battle field, I satisfied myself that no possible disgrace could be attached to our defeat, as our men had to land from their ships in the face of a well intrenched and strongly fortified position bristling B 18 with batteries, a feat which would be counted madness in any modern commander to attempt, and can only be accounted for by the contempt in which our generals held the American militia at that period. I also visited the State House, a building with a yellow dome, looking rather like an overgrown Turkish bath, but containing the hall in which the famous declaration of independence was signed, which ultimately resulted in the severance of our Trans-Atlantic colonies from the mother country.

Boston claims to be the modern Athens of the West, the Edinburgh of the Union, with this single difference between it and our own northern capital, that the claims of Boston are so well founded that they axe never denied in America. Not only the greatest names, but nearly all the names eminent in American literature, science, and art, are those of Bostonians: Boston is, in fact, always pointed to as the model city of the Union—the model city for the good order, intelligence, and quiet prosperity of its inhabitants—the model city for the jealous care with which the progress of public education is watched and fostered by the State. New Yorkers sulkily admit their superiority in these respects, but fairly enough point to the heterogeneous mass of emigrants who yearly inundate their streets, as reasons why that city is less orderly and has made less intellectual progress: so, with the exception of an occasional sneer at the rigid excellence of Boston, and now and then a bitter cut, when they do detect a short-coming 19 among its people and rulers, the claims of the English city of America, as it is called, are as generally admitted as any superior excellence ever is in this world. Boston in its general appearance, and in the houses and manners of its people, is certainly the most English city I saw in the States; its inhabitants also are not a little proud of this resemblance, which strikes the visitor at

once, for, in no city in the United States, is the feeling of affection, towards what they call the mother country, so strong or so kindly.

I did not remain here long, for as the Spring campaign on the Rappahannock, was about to commence I was anxious to push on and get as near the seat of war as possible; so, on the morning of the second day after my arrival, I bade adieu to Boston, and started in company with my newly found friends for New York.

As this was my first experience in American railway travelling, I shall here give you a short description of that most uncomfortable means of locomotion. We were deposited at a wooden shed, looking more like a barn than a railway station, and our baggage was bundled off the top of our vehicle into the mud. There were no porters, none of the recognised and established aids to locomotion to which we are accustomed in Europe; but a number of amateurs divided the spoil and carried it into the offices, whilst I was directed to struggle for my ticket in another little wooden box, from which I presently received the necessary document, full of the B 2 20 dreadful warnings and conditions which railway companies inflict on the public in all free countries. The whole of the luggage was taken charge of by a man, who checked it through to New York, giving me a slip of brass with a number corresponding with a brass ticket for each piece. I must in fairness admit that this part of their system is much superior to ours, as when you arrive near your destination a man walks through the car, receives half a dollar, takes your checks and forwards your luggage to your hotel, thus saving you all the trouble and annoyance attendant on the claiming of baggage in this country. Having got our tickets and checks, we stumbled into a long box upon wheels, with a double row of most uncomfortable seats and a passage down the middle; the great bell of the engine tolled, and off we started. The passengers were crowded as close as they could pack; and as there was an immense iron stove in the centre of the car, although the weather was anything but cold, the heat and stuffiness were most trying. Once a minute, at least, the door at either end of the carriage was opened—(for these cars, I must inform you, communicate with one another by means of a platform at each end, so that a person can walk from one end of the train to the other,) and then

closed with a sharp crashing noise that jarred the nerves, and, had it been night time, would effectually have prevented sleep. This was sometimes done by a man whose sole object seemed to be to walk up the centre 21 of the carriage in order to go out of the opposite door; occasionally it was the work of the newspaper boy, with a sheaf of journals and trashy illustrated papers under his arm; now and then it was the conductor; but the periodical visitor was a young gentleman with chain and rings, who bore a tray before him with gum and lemon drops, which, with tobacco, apples, and cakes, were consumed in great quantities by the passengers.

The one grand fault (there are other smaller ones) of these conveyances is that they admit of but one class. Two reasons for this are given. The first is that the finances will not admit of divided accommodation, the second that the republican nature of the people will not brook a superior or aristocratic classification of travelling. But I do not believe the question of expenditure has anything to do with it: were a better class of carriages organized, as large a portion of the population would use them in the United States as in any country in Europe; and since dearer rates for one class would allow of cheaper for the others, a greater proportion of poor travellers, who are now excluded by the high rates, would move about, and thus general travelling would be encouraged and increased. But the real fact is, that the railway companies are afraid to put themselves at variance with the general feeling of the people, a feeling which argues a total mistake as to the nature of that liberty and equality, for the security of which the people are so anxious; and that mistake is the 22 very one which has made shipwreck of many attempts at freedom in other countries. It argues the same confusion between social and political equality which has led multitudes astray who have longed for liberty fervently, but have not thought of it carefully. If a first class railway carriage should be held as offensive, so should a first class house, horse, or dinner—but these things are very rife in America. Of course it may be said that the expenditure shown in these lastnamed objects is private and cannot be controlled, and that railway travelling is of a public nature and can be made subject to public opinion; but the fault lies in the public opinion which desires to control matters of this nature, with

which it has no business to meddle, and which would be much more nobly and usefully employed in objects which would serve to elevate and refine the tone and manners of the people.

The country between New York and Boston is devoid of natural beauties; it is pretty well wooded, but the timber is small; indeed I hardly saw any fine timber during the whole of my stay in America. It is, however, very well cultivated, and the houses present a neater appearance than they do in other parts of the States, being built of wood, and painted white, with green Venetian blinds. The extensive use of wood in the building of houses is very productive of fires, as in the winter they are heated by means of stoves, the pipes of which becoming red hot, often set fire to the adjoining partitions. Hardly a night passes without several 23 fires occurring in the towns, and the system of volunteer fire-brigades has, in consequence, reached a great pitch of perfection, and is reckoned among the institutions of the country.

After a slow and tedious journey, (for railway travelling in America, in addition to its discomfort, is about the slowest in the world, their fastest trains, or lightning expresses, as they call them, never going at the rate of more than 25 miles an hour,) we found ourselves passing straggling lines of houses meant to represent streets, and we were told that we had reached 146th street, at present the outside one of New York, but which in a few years, at the rate they are now building, will be well inside the town. By degrees the streets presented a less straggling appearance, and were more built up, and we soon stopped, parted from the engine, and were drawn by horses through one of the principal thoroughfares to the depot, as they call the station in that country. I do not know of any town which disappoints the stranger so much as New York. Having heard so much of the Empire City, as the Yankees love to to call it, one expects to find all the excellencies of London, Paris, and St. Petersburgh combined, with their defects omitted: but in reality you find all their defects and none of their excellencies. To my mind the only things worth seeing in the whole town are Broadway, Fifth Avenue, and the Central Park. Broadway, although not the Elysium of thoroughfares, which Americans suppose it to be, is certainly

a very 24 fine street: in ten or twenty years it will perhaps be the finest in the world. Now it is too unequal. Here is a row of colossal marble palaces, next a small group of ordinary shops, built when New York was in its infancy. Then comes a grand series of buildings carved in solid stone, with shops as large and extensive as small towns, employing almost a population of assistants. To these succeed cast-iron stores, with richly decorated fronts, and so on; at a distance looking down the street, the effect is fine, when the inequalities are concealed; but on a closer inspection, it wants that uniformity which is so necessary to produce a really grand effect. The same may be said of Fifth Avenue, the West End or Belgravia of New York: some of the houses are handsome, but the greater number have a compressed, squeezed-up aspect, which arises from the compulsory narrowness of frontage in proportion to the height of the building, and all of them are bright and new as if they were just finished to order, a most astonishing proof of the rapid development of the city.

But the Central Park is, or rather will be when finished, the glory of New York, the finest thing of its kind in the world. When it was found that the city was extending itself, a space was selected outside the limits of the city as then built, but nearly in the centre of the city as is intended to be built. This space, about three miles long by three quarters of a mile broad, is admirably adapted to its purpose by 25 the natural inequalities of the ground. These have been taken advantage of with great skill by the designers, and the result is a succession of lakes, grottoes, caverns, and waterfalls, which, for general effect and elaborate detail, are unequalled by anything I have ever seen.

I had often heard of American hospitality, but, I must say, what I experienced exceeded anything I ever anticipated. Only bring with you the poorest scrap of a note of introduction —only show the seal of your social passport, and it must be your own fault if you are not at once at home with the whole community. The first man who lays hold of you ushers you into his entire circle. In ten minutes you are made to shake a hundred hands, and presently, on your name being down in the hotel book and vouched for as something above a pickpocket, you are waited upon by unknown persons who, you are

to understand, are conspicuous citizens taking upon themselves the duty of doing the honours of the place, and making you free of their houses no less than of their town. This open-hearted, open-handed benevolence towards strangers is characteristic of all Americans, especially of the upper classes. They live in a hurry, they have little leisure to be particular about their acquaintance; as long as the stranger behaves well, people trouble themselves little about his Trans-Atlantic antecedents. They are an eager, inquisitive people; the untravelled among them fancy there is always 26 something to pick up, something to wonder at and to learn from every one who comes to them from the Old World. When you have delivered your credentials in the morning, you are, as a matter of course, expected to take your dinner or supper in the evening. The drawbridge of the American home is always let down: its sanctuary always accessible. For a week or a fortnight the hotel affords you nothing but sleeping accommodation. For the rest your friends provide. They ply you with “cocktails” and “smashes” (for the benefit of the uninitiated I must explain that these are kinds of drink in vogue among the Yankees), and with cigars at the counting-house in the forenoon they treat you to sherry cobblers and mint juleps at the bar in the evening: they drive you in their buggies to their villas in the country, or to the cemetery, which is the park to all American cities. They enter your name at the Exchange, the Library, or the Club; their town and all it boasts becomes no less yours than theirs.

Such was the life I led for the first fortnight after my arrival in New York, and I should have much liked to have prolonged my stay there, but I had a good deal to see, and but a limited time to see it in. I was exceedingly curious to get to the army on the Rappahannock, but from all I heard I feared it was impossible, as they had already began to move, and a battle was daily expected; however, I procured letters of introduction to people high in command at Washington; 27 and armed with these, started off on the morning of the 28th of April, for the capital, passing through Philadelphia in a street car, a long low omnibus drawn by horses over a railway in the middle of the street. It was filled with people of all classes, and at every crossing some one rang the bell, and the driver

stopped to take out or let in passengers; an operation which was repeated so often as to nearly make us miss the train. We afterwards crossed a river, the Susquehannah, in rather a peculiar way; the train, engine and all, ran on to the top of a steam boat which took it across the river, and deposited it on the other side in the same way. A picket of soldiers was stationed at the landing place, and from thence to Washington was a succession of camps, for we were now in Maryland, a slave-holding State, and a very hot-bed of secession.

Arrived at our journey's end, we drove to Willand's Hotel, a quadrangular mass of rooms, six stories high, and some hundreds of yards square. This was the first genuine American hotel I had been in, for in Boston and New York I stopped at hotels conducted on the European plan. There were crowds in the hall, through which one could scarce make way; the writing room was crowded, and the rustle of pens rose to the breeze: the smoking-room, the bar, the barber's shop, the reception-room, the ladies' drawing-room, all were crowded. At the full time of the year no less than 2,500 people dine in the public room every day. On the kitchen floor there is 28 a vast apartment, a hall without any carpet or furniture but plain chairs and tables, which are ranged in close rows, at which flocks of people are feeding or discoursing, or from which they are flying away. The servants never cease shoving the chairs to and fro, with a harsh screeching noise over the floor, so that one can scarce hear his neighbours speak; if he did, he would probably hear a man order breakfast as follows:—“black tea, toast, poached eggs, fresh herring, wild pigeon, pigs' feet, two robins, fried oysters,” and a quantity of bread and cakes of various denominations. The waste consequent on such orders is enormous, and the ability required to conduct these establishments successfully is expressed by the common phrase in the States, “so and so is a clever man, but he can't manage an hotel.” The tumult, the miscellaneous nature of the company, the heated, muggy rooms, not to speak of the great abominableness of the passages and halls, despite a most liberal provision of spittoons, conduce to render these institutions by no means agreeable to Europeans. You can obtain a bed-room with a sitting-room attached, but you must pay highly for any

departure from the routine life of the natives. Ladies enjoy a handsome drawing-room with pianos, sofas, and easy chairs, all to themselves.

Washington has been called, I forget exactly by whom, but I rather think by Dickens, The City of Magnificent Distances. As a consequence of the grand conceptions entertained by the founders of the future 29 greatness of the capital, it is all suburbs and no city. There is a certain nobility about the proposed dimensions of its avenues and squares: the design is grand, but the thing, as done, falls so infinitely short of that design that nothing but disappointment is felt. There are certainly some magnificent buildings, among which the Capitol stands pre-eminent, a vast mass of white marble, towering above the other buildings, stretching out in colonnaded porticos and long flanks of windowed masonry, and surrounded by an unfinished cupola, from which scaffold and cranes raise their black arms. The main entrance to the interior is by a noble flight of steps, which adds much to the grand and imposing effect of its lofty facade. You enter the Rotundo beneath the dome, a lofty and spacious circular hall, its walls covered with pictures representing scenes which occurred in the English and Mexican wars, and portraits of the most distinguished generals in each. On the right of this is the Hall of Representatives, on the left the Senate Chamber, both of them dingy-looking, tawdry apartments, by no means fitted to be the council-chambers of the Legislative Assemblies of one of the most powerful nations in the world. The White House, the residence of the President, which has very much the air of a portion of a bank or public office, being provided with glass doors and plain heavy chairs and forms; the Treasury, a magnificent colonnade of white marble; the Washington Monument, which looks like an unfinished light-house, and a few other buildings, 30 make up the sum of the sights to be seen in this city.

I was unable to obtain the permission I had hoped for, viz. to go on to the Rapahannock, as skirmishing had already commenced in the front, and we saw some Confederate prisoners who had been taken in the rifle pits when the army first crossed the river, but I got a pass to visit the chain of fortifications on the other side of the Potomac. Taking a carriage, we crossed the river about two miles above Washington. Here the inner line

of fortifications begin, forming a semi-circle of about five miles, from the aqueduct to the long bridge, its apex being at Arlington House, formerly belonging to General Lee, the Confederate Commander-in-chief. The forts are about thirteen in number, all earthworks, surrounded by a ditch and abattis, but they would be regular slaughter pens if exposed to shell fire. The troops were encamped behind, and were going through drill as we drove by; most of the men seemed to be German or Irish, and the officers were for the most part, in a state of profound ignorance of company drill, as might be seen by their confusion, and inability to take their places when the companies faced about or moved from one flank to the other. The artillery is the most efficient looking arm of the service, but the horses are too light and the guns of too many shapes and patterns. The camp seemed dirty, but the streets were well kept, the tents being shaded from the sun by means of evergreens and pine boughs. We 31 drove to General Lee's house, to get a permit to cross the long bridge, which is used exclusively for military purposes: it is a very good specimen of a Virginian Planter's house, with slave quarters attached, the grounds nicely laid out, and before the war must have been prettily wooded; but now the axe was busy among the trees, and the trunks of many were prostrate on the ground. It is now the head quarters of the Commander-in-chief of the army of the Potomac, and a huge Stars and Stripes was flying from a flagstaff close by. It commands a very striking and picturesque view of the city, and a wide spread of country, studded with tents as far as the eye could reach, towards Maryland. We returned to the city by the Long Bridge, a structure of brick and wood, more than a mile long, partly causeway, partly platform, which serves for a railroad as well as a passenger bridge: the consequence is, that hardly a day passes without some accident occurring on it, since the railway track is not divided from the carriage road. Washington is one of the most uninteresting places in the world to stay in; so, finding we had no chance of getting to the front, and as my companions' leave was drawing to a close, we determined on returning to New York, on our way to Canada. We spent a day at Baltimore, the monumental city, as it is called, from the fact of its having three monuments. It is the cleanest and best built American town that I visited, but a very hot-bed of secession. At the corners of the streets strong 32 guards of soldiers were posted, and patrols moved up and

down the thoroughfares. The inhabitants looked sullen and sad. A small war is waged by the police recently appointed by the Federal authorities against the women, who exhibit much ingenuity in expressing their animosity to the Stars and Stripes, by dressing their children in Confederate colors, and wearing the same in ribbons and bows.

After staying a day or two with our hospitable friends at New York, we started for Montreal, by the Hudson River and Lake Champlain. The scenery the whole way is magnificent; but I will defer giving a description of it till later, when I again travelled the same route, and the foliage added greatly to its charms.

Steam-boat travelling is certainly a branch in which the Americans peculiarly excel: the one we went in, the Isaac Newtown by name, which has been lately blown up, causing large loss of life, was over 400 feet long, with a gorgeously-decorated saloon running the whole length of the vessel, lit with gas, brilliant with mirrors, and luxuriously furnished with lounging sofas and easy chairs; below it was the supper-room, and above it the sleeping cabins, with hot and cold water pipes laid on, each containing two berths, larger and more comfortable than those on board ocean going steamers. They differ very materially in shape from those we are accustomed to, being quite flat bottomed, in fact like a large raft with a house built on it, with balconies running round 33 each story; the paddle wheels are propelled by walking beam engines-huge cylinders working on top of the fabric, and driving the vessel through the water at the rate of twenty miles an hour.

At Albany, the legislative capital of the State of New York, we left the steamer and took the train, re-embarking at Whitehall, a village at the end of Lake Champlain. This is a beautiful sheet of water 140 miles in length, but, unlike most American lakes, very narrow, its width not exceeding ten miles at any point, and averaging about five. We arrived at Rousespoint in the evening, where we again took the train, and after half-an-hour's journey found ourselves on the banks of a noble river, with the lights of a large city twinkling on the other side—the river was the St. Lawrence, the city, Montreal, the commercial capital of British North America.

Before proceeding any further, I will briefly advert to a few points which cannot fail to strike a stranger during his first visit to the United States, especially at a time like the present.

In the first place the levity of the American character, which this war has brought out in bold relief, is very remarkable. There is something saddening, indeed revolting, in the high glee, real or affected, with which the people here look upon what ought to be, at any rate, a national calamity. The indulgence in every variety of pleasure, luxury, and extravagance is simply shocking. The jeweller's shops in all these cities have C 34 doubled and trebled their trade: the love of fine dress and ornaments on the part of the women amounts to madness, especially among the “nouveaux riches,” the wives and daughters of the shoddy contractors who have made their money by Government contracts, supplying the army with inferior articles, for which they charge enormous prices. However they have the money, and well or ill gotten, they must enjoy it. Every fresh bulletin from the battle-field of Chancellorsville during my short sojourn in the States, brought long lists of the dead and wounded, many of whom belonged to the best families in New York, yet the signs of mourning were hardly anywhere perceptible: the noisy gaiety of the town was not abated one jot. The balls, concerts, and dinner parties went on as usual; the theatres were not less full. There may be a great deal of empty bravado, swagger, and bluster, in all this apparent indifference to undeniable suffering, but it works no pleasing impression on a sensitive stranger. On the whole, one comes away with little respect for the earnestness and dignity of the people one has left behind. The sterling soundness of the English character is dying away among this second-hand Anglo-Saxon race, partly owing to the admixture of less solid elements, but more to the influence of the climate, the working of the social institutions, and that exulting consciousness of the boundless wealth of the soil, which has power they think to repair all broken fortunes, to heal all social and domestic wounds.

The second point I wish to allude to is the social condition of the Negroes in the free North, a state of things peculiarly unintelligible and revolting to one who all his life has been accustomed to that true liberty which I firmly believe is only really to be enjoyed under our own glorious constitution.

“There he is recognised as a free man by a constitution which certainly does proclaim all men to have been born equal: but his freedom is mutilated and circumscribed in all directions. He is not, indeed, held to be the servant of the state. He cannot be marched off to build bridges or macadamise roads. He is not bound to show his pass or give an account of himself, or explain his means of subsistence at the nearest police station, or to take off his hat to every white man he meets in the streets, as in the French or Spanish West Indian colonies. But he has no free agency; he cannot adopt any business or profession that he chooses; he cannot be an elector except under very stringent limitations; and as for becoming a member of Congress, he might as well aspire to succeed to the Empire of China or an estate in the moon. But more than this, and worse than this, he must be content to be regarded as an out-cast and a pariah by the drab-colored philanthropists of Philadelphia and the Celtic aristocracy of New York. Not only is he not politically the equal of the white man, but he is socially far his inferior—he pays for his nominal freedom by an amount of hatred and contumely which is C 2 36 wholly unintelligible on this side of the Atlantic. His freedom bears a bitterer fruit than the slavery of his compatriots in the South, for the slave of the South is often the pet of his master, and is caressed with a fondness which would not be lavished on an equal or rival race, while the negro in the North has to bear the whole pressure of that galling contempt with which men a certain position sneer down the attempts of those who vainly aspire to attain to it. He is the victim alike of German rudeness and Yankee brutality; and the practical aid which he obtains from his abolitionist friends is of the slightest and coldest kind. His career is that of a poor devil, born to be a waiter, a barber, or a porter; to be shut out of omnibusses and churches, jostled in the streets, and sworn at as an unseasonable intrusion on the every day life of mankind.”*

* Quarterly Review, July, 1863.

I hope that by quoting the foregoing remarks I may not be understood as advocating the cause of slavery, an institution which I believe to be alike repugnant to the written Word of God, and to those laws of nature by which the human race is directed and governed. But I wish to combat a notion that has prevailed among a large class of people, but which, I am happy to say, is now becoming exploded, a notion that the North is fighting for the slave. I do not believe it. That a section of the community, some of the earnest, well intentioned, New England Puritans, are actuated 37 by this motive, I do not doubt, but they are a mere drop in the ocean of that multitude, to whom the lust of conquest, the unsatiable greed of universal dominion, the hopes of building up an empire which may be able to bully and dictate to the rest of mankind are paramount to all other considerations, and who use the cry of abolition as a cloak to conceal their ambitious designs from the eyes of the world.

In a conversation I had with one of the leading British residents in the States, he expressed his opinion that the assertion of their independence by the South, would in time be the most effectual means for bringing about the emancipation of the slaves, for, he argued, were the North to gain the upper hand, spite of all the emancipation proclamations of President Lincoln, they would be obliged to allow the social institution, as it is called, to remain, in order to conciliate the people they had subdued: on the other hand, were the South to succeed in asserting their independence, they could not long withstand the pressure of the world's opinion, which would be brought to bear on the only slave-holding state in the world. But I have already wandered too far from the thread of my narrative, and am disinclined to enter further on the discussion of a question, to the settlement of which time alone can bring a solution.

Montreal is in wealth, in population, in intelligence, in fact, in all the great social and commercial qualities which go to form a capital, the capital of Canada, 38 although a recent decision of the home government has declared that Ottawa in future is to be the

seat of the colonial government, a decision upon which I shall have something to say when we reach that place in the course of our travels.

Viewed from the opposite bank of the St. Lawrence, or from the commanding summit of Mont Royale, which rises grandly above the city, and from which it takes its name, the appearance of the whole place is unsurpassed by anything in North America. The churches and public buildings are massive and noble looking stone structures; the houses lofty and handsomely built, and the streets, for the most part, clean and, for a Canadian town, well paved. About the whole place there is an air of business and wealth which speaks at once of active, long established prosperity.

But the glory of Montreal is the magnificent Victoria Bridge, the most splendid testimony in the world to the enterprise and skill of the British nation. As an engineering triumph over natural difficulties of the most stupendous kind it is not only without its equal, but the world offers nothing that can fairly be put in comparison with it, a fact which some of my hearers will recognize when I inform them that it is more than five times as long as the tubular bridge over the Menai Straits, being nearly two miles in length.

But the difficulties with which the constructors of the Menai had to contend were as nothing in comparison 39 with the obstacles which presented themselves to the engineers of its great Canadian, I was going to say, rival, but I think I may use the word conqueror, without in the least detracting from the merits of the former structure. It must be borne in mind that the St. Lawrence at this point is two miles wide; that in summer, when at its lowest ebb, the current flows like a sluice at the rate of eight miles an hour, and that in winter millions of tons of ice come crashing down it, threatening as it were to sweep away every obstacle which the hand of man should dare to oppose to its wrath. It must also be remembered that the whole of its bed is a mere quicksand, strewed over the bottom with gigantic boulders, and that the depth of water is seldom less than twenty-five feet.

When any one takes the trouble to think quietly over the nature of these obstacles, and then looks up at the lofty rib of iron which stretches high in the air from shore to shore, he cannot fail to recognise in it the grandest and most successful engineering work which has yet been accomplished.

Statistics are dry subjects at the best, so I will only mention that the bridge is 9,500 feet long, 100 feet above the river, and is composed of 25 tubes, each 270 feet long, and resting on 24 piers of granite, facing towards the set of the current with a long massive wedge of masonry, sharp enough to divide the icefields of the St. Lawrence.

I found Canadian hospitality quite equal to American, 40 and a very pleasant fortnight I spent, my time being chiefly occupied in boating on Lake St. Louis, an expansion of the St. Lawrence, or in expeditions to Lachine and La Prairie, the latter, the residence of one of the few remaining branches of the Troquois Indians, one of the six great nations which, in times gone by, held all North America as their hunting grounds. At the expiration of my visit I embarked on board one of the river boats, and, after steaming down the St. Lawrence all night, went on deck in the morning just as we came in sight of Point Levi, and then slowly on the other side of the broad river, the steep rugged heights of Abraham and the lofty outlines of Quebec rose gradually into view.

The appearance of this quaint old city from the river is always grand and imposing. Its old historical associations are well borne out by the rough grey tiers of houses rising one above the other, with their bright tin roofs contrasting with the antique fashion of the buildings themselves, amid which, in huge heavy outlines, the walls of the fortress wind up and down with all the engineering eccentricities of salient and re-entering angles.

The view from the citadel is, I think, in panoramic effect unequalled; at your feet runs a noble river, bearing on its broad bosom countless ships of all nations; all around you are smiling fields, sprinkled with the white cottages of the inhabitants, their tin roofs glittering in the sun, the horizon bounded by 41 blue mountains of every shape and size; add to these

elements of beauty the charms of an American sky, and the consciousness that you are on classic ground, for near where you are standing a small column marks the place where Wolfe fell in the arms of victory, and you must surely feel such emotions of pleasure and delight as seldom fall to your lot to experience.

The environs of Quebec abound with objects of interest to both the lovers of the picturesque and to the historian. The most remarkable feature in its vicinity are the Falls of Montmorenci, next to those of Yo Hamite in California, the highest in the world, Niagara itself not excepted. The river, only some 150 feet across, but very deep, comes brawling down a series of rocky chasms to the edge of a tremendous cliff, which opens upon the St. Lawrence, and over which the stream rushes in one grand heavy mass down a sheer unbroken depth of nearly 300 feet. Strange as it may seem, not drop of this tremendous body of water is known to enter the river, which it apparently rushes to meet. A little narrow semicircular ledge of rocks, a couple of feet high, surround the foot of the fall, separating it from the tidal marks of the great river. The hole has never been fathomed—its course never traced—things that pass over Montmorenci are never more seen. On the same river, three miles above the falls, are the Natural Steps, a gem of Canadian scenery unequalled in America, a wild lonely place, where a series of rocks, as regular 42 as colossal steps, jut out on either side into the deep narrow rapids of the Montmorenci. Their geological formation is curious, but few would care to think of such matters when in this wild quiet glen, hemmed in by massive rocks, that are clothed with trees which almost shut out the light of day. Besides these are the falls of the Chaudiere and Lorette, the lakes of Beauport and St. Charles, perfect in their way,—miniature Killarneys and Windermeres,—all of which I visited, but of which time will not permit me to give any description.

I must, however, mention the heights of Abraham, where, as I have before said, a small column marks the place where Wolfe fell. They are just outside the citadel, overlooking the river, and the small redoubt which our troops threw up on that eventful day may still faintly be traced—slight mounds of earth which mark the struggle that gave England the possession of this gigantic empire. From the monument a winding road is cut through the

rock to Wolfe's Cove, where he landed from the opposite side of the river, and scaled hills to which those of Inkerman were mere mole hills either for height or steepness.

From Quebec I returned to Montreal, and after a week's sojourn there, started on my way to Upper Canada, Niagara, and the Western States of the Union. The proper way from Montreal to Ottawa is by water, but having missed the boat the day I commenced my journey, I had not time to wait for the next, so went 43 by rail. However, I had previously seen the prettiest part of the river—the rapids of St. Anne's—which Moore has immortalized in his Canadian boat-song, a song which as much resembles the real Canadian boat-song as it does “God save the Queen.”

As I have said before, Ottawa is destined to be the political capital of Canada, and the seat of government. Canada, as you probably know, is divided into two provinces, Upper and Lower; formerly they had separate legislatures and separate governors, but now they are united. Lower Canada is chiefly inhabited by the descendants of the early French settlers: Upper Canada exclusively by English, Irish, or Scotch. Formerly, and indeed still, till the new Parliament-houses are finished, the legislative assemblies alternated between Quebec and Toronto, five years at either place, so as to give each province an equal share of the benefits to be derived from their presence. This plan, however, was found to be inconvenient, and after a great deal of squabbling the matter was referred to the home government, who decided in favour of Ottawa, because, I suppose, it was situated on the borders of the two provinces, that being the only possible pretext which could be alleged for fixing upon such an out-of-the-way spot for the capital of a great empire.

The first stone of the new buildings was laid by the Prince of Wales a little more than two years ago, and when I was there they were about half finished—they are three in number, the principal one being 600 feet 44 long, and forming with the other two, three sides of a square. They are built of the stone of the district, a kind of very hard red granite, and the pillars inside are of Ottawa marble, of a coarse description, but susceptible of a very high polish. Their situation is magnificent, standing as they do on a bluff, on the

edge of a precipice, sheer 200 feet above the river. The Chaudiere Falls, just above the town, are very fine, second only to Niagara in the mass of water which pours over them: on each side of the falls are the timber shoots, a contrivance necessary to get down the mass of timber brought from the upper Ottawa, as the result of letting them over the falls themselves would be simply to destroy the logs. For this purpose a certain portion of the river is dammed off and turned into a broad, wide channel of timber, which is taken at a sharp incline, cut into the bank of the river, and down which the waters of the Ottawa rush at a terrific speed. The head of this shoot is placed some 300 or 400 yards above the falls, and terminates after a run of three quarters of a mile in the still waters of the river below their base. But as the raft on such a steep incline, and hurried along by such a rush of water, would attain a speed which would destroy itself and all upon it, the fall of the shoot is broken at intervals by straight runs, along which it glides at a comparatively reduced speed, till it drops over the next incline, and again commences another head-long.

45

From Ottawa I went by rail to Kingston, the road for the most part hemmed in by the tremendous Canadian forests, which cast a peculiar sombre gloom over the little line of rails between. There is something in the ponderous stillness of these forests, something in the appearance of their wild, mossy dark recesses, which impresses the traveller in a new aspect each time he sees them, awakening ideas of melancholy admiration impossible to forget. In Upper Canada the endless masses of pine give way at last, or at most stand thinly intermingled with gigantic beeches, tall hemlocks and ash, with maples, birch and wild sycamore, the underwood of these great leafy hills. Mile after mile, and hour after hour of such a route was passed, a deep, black solitude, with here and there a vista opening up, showing the massive trunks, grey as cathedral ruins, which bore the rich canopy of leaves aloft; now and then we passed a little clearing with its log hut, and the charred, black stumps of burnt pines, rearing themselves like tombstones over the sprouting crops of Indian corn below, and the question could not fail to present itself while reflecting upon the vast amount of labour required to convert even a small space of such forest into arable

land, whether the same amount of labour and industry, exercised at home, would not be productive of far greater and higher results.

At Kingston I took the steamer on Lake Ontario for Toronto. It is a commonly received opinion that 46 the scenery of these large American lakes is exceedingly beautiful, but when I tell my hearers that this one, the smallest of the five, is sixty miles across, or as broad as the Irish Channel between Kingstown and Holyhead, they will readily imagine that there can be nothing very beautiful in such an expanse of water, especially as the shores when you do see them are flat and uninteresting. The bay of Kingston, however, looked exceedingly pretty that evening, as we steered out into the lake, studded as it is with numerous islands, the clean, well-built town, with its frowning citadel, forming a most pleasing background.

Early next morning we rounded the long spit of land which stretches out before Toronto, forming for its commerce one of the most perfect natural harbours in the world, and soon came to an anchor before the magnificent capital of Upper Canada. Although direct communication with Europe, by means of ocean-going vessels, gives Montreal advantages which Toronto does not possess, and though the former city boasts of nearly double the number of inhabitants, still, taking these circumstances into consideration, I should be inclined to give the palm to Toronto, as well for the thriving air of prosperity which it wears, as for the magnificence of its streets, shops, and public buildings; some of the latter which I visited, the University and the Osgoode Hall, which answers to our Four Courts, are unequalled by anything on that side of the Atlantic. But my stay was but brief here, as I was 47 impatient to press on to Niagara, the idol of all the worshippers of nature, the cataract of all the cataracts, the goal and object of western travel.

I therefore started the next day, and stopping a night at Hamilton, a thriving, prosperous town on the shores of Burlington Bay, on Lake Ontario, I arrived on the following afternoon at the Niagara Falls station, on the Canadian side of the river, where a beautiful suspension bridge, like a web of iron, thin and delicate as a net, spans the ravine between

the cliffs, which on either side hem in the rapids, and serves both for a railway bridge and also for one for carts and foot-passengers. It is about a mile and a half from the station to the hotel, which is situated opposite to and in full view of the Falls, the road following the course of the stream, which whirls and gurgles like an Alpine torrent many times magnified, in a deep gorge. As the rude bellow of the steam engine and the rattle of the train proceeding on its journey were dying away, the echoes seemed to swell into a sustained, reverberating, hollow sound, from the perpendicular banks of the Saint Lawrence. As we proceeded the sound became louder, filling the air with a strange quavering note of a uniform bass—trees closed in the river on every side, but after a mile or two, through an opening in the branches there appeared, closing up the vista, white, flickering, indistinct, and shroud-like—the Falls, rushing into a grave of black waters, and uttering that tremendous cry which never can be forgotten.

48

Amid such a scene, by the side of that great altar of nature, where a misty incense is always rising to heaven, and the eternity of water speaks only of One, as you stand before the Falls of Niagara, which pours down with such a majesty of power that you can only gaze with solemn awe upon the grandest and most terrible of all God's works in nature, everything external must be for the time forgotten. It is a scene which poets and authors have tried for years, but always failed to tell. Artists have studied there; poets have drawn their inspirations from its huge green billows, and some of the ablest writers of the Old World have told us less what they saw, perhaps, than what they thought, of these mighty cataracts. But Niagara is still, and must always be, unpainted and unsung. You miss in all the best attempts its might, its ever-changing play of colours, its hideous rush, its restlessness, its roar. Words, in fact, are powerless before the stupendous force and terror of this cataract, and all the wealth of language would be exhausted before one could tell how the great hill of waters which drops from the cliff, so smooth, so green, so deep, changes ere one can mark its fall into millions of columns of spray, which darting out like

white fireworks, shoot down and down, till lost in the cloud of mist which always wraps the base of the Falls in dim and grand obscurity.

There are, of course, many ways of seeing the Falls, but the point of view from which they appeared to me 49 with the greatest advantage was from above, from the Goat Island, from the furthest extremity of which a wooden bridge, stretching from rock to rock on the very verge of the great fall, leads to Terrapin Tower, on which you stand directly over the deep green mass of water which now, no longer, as a little higher up, struggling in waves, here yields to its fate, and flowing smooth as oil, comes slowly and solemnly over the cliff like a green curtain, and with one stately massive plunge pours down and down, till the eye loses its rush, and the bright emerald hill of water shades into dazzling white, as broken at last in its long fall, it parts into spray, and disappears in mist.

There is a hollow cliff on the Canadian side by which you can get for the space of forty or fifty yards behind the Horse Shoe or Greater Fall. It requires, however, a good head and considerable nerve, for if you take one false step, all the world could not prolong your life for an instant. I do not, however, think the visit repays the trouble and risk, as you are so blinded by the spray and deafened by the noise, that you can see but little of what is going on around you.

There are many objects of interest in the vicinity of Niagara, the most interesting of which are Queenstown heights, where a monument marks the place where General Brock fell, after defeating the Americans at the battle of Lundy's Lane, and from which a magnificent panorama is obtained over the surrounding country, over the rich, gently-undulating, well-cultivated D 50 hills, the soft-blue expanse of Lake Ontario, and the deep black ravine down which Niagara thunders, its roar faintly heard like a dying wind, and its course only marked by a ridge of soft-haze.

During the week I stopped at the Clifton house, the principal hotel in the place, the roar of the cataract outside alternated with the din of politics within, for on the Canadian side

of the falls many Americans of the Southern States who would not pollute their footsteps by contact with the soil of Yankee land, were sojourning, and merchants and bankers of New York and other northern cities also flock there in great numbers to avoid the intense heat in the towns. This was one of the few opportunities I had of meeting Southerners, and I must say, the contrast between them and the Northerners was very much in their favour. I left Niagara, intending to go to Chicago by water, through Lakes Erie, Huron, and Michigan, but on arriving at Buffalo I found that there was nothing but a trading steamer with very bad passenger accommodation, so took my passage only as far as Cleveland, a town at the top of Lake Erie, and a long, dreary day I spent steaming along its flat shores. Cleveland is a true type of a Western American town, the streets all laid out at right angles to one another, broad and illpaved, with rows of Linden trees on either side. From thence I took the train, and after travelling all night woke up and found we were passing through miles of swamps fringed by belts of trees: on the right glimpses 51 of the water could be caught through openings in the wood, the inland sea on which stands the Queen of the Lakes. Michigan looks broad and blue as the Mediterranean. Large farm-houses stud the country, and houses which must be the retreat of merchants and citizens with means: and when the train leaving the land altogether, dashes out on a pier and causeway built along the borders of the lake, we see lines of noble houses, a fine boulevard, a forest of masts, huge isolated piles of masonry, the famed grain elevators, by which so many have been hoisted to fortune, churches, public edifices, and all the apparatus of a great city.

For sudden growth and immense prosperity, Chicago probably stands unequalled even in the history of western enterprise and progress. Thirty years ago it was an Indian trading post, twenty, a small wooden prairie town of 5000 inhabitants. It is now an immense city with rows of stately streets, noble public buildings, fine squares and avenues, the centre of an immense trade, with a rich and thriving population of 160,000 people, to which the tide of emigration alone adds thousands every year.

The cause of this unexampled prosperity lies in it's being the commercial capital, the centre of the trade of the State of Illinois; a State comprising within its boundaries a tract of

prairie land, of almost precisely the same size as England and Wales, with a soil of such unequalled fertility that it is a common saying, that the settler has only to tickle the ground with a D 2 52 hoe and instantly it laughs with a harvest of corn. With such resources, Chicago must always maintain the position it now holds, that of being the largest corn depôt in the world, not excepting Odessa and Alexandria. The corn lifts, or grain elevators as they are called, are among the sights of the place, some of them containing millions of bushels of wheat. But it is not as storehouses that these great buildings are so remarkable, but as channels or river courses for the flooding freshets of corn. They are so constructed that both railway vans and vessels come immediately under their claws, as I may call the great trunks of the elevators. Out of the railway vans the corn and wheat is clawed up into the building, and down similar trunks, it is at once again poured into the vessels.

From Chicago to St. Louis the line ran through the prairie, a flat sea-like expanse, a great verdant circle, through which the train sped as a ship through the sea, leaving the rigid iron wake behind it tapering to a point at the horizon. Yet, the land is not all level—it has a series of gentle undulations, of low, long, sloping ridges, as if an inland sea, when slowly moving with a quiet, regular, swell, had on the instant been changed to rich and fertile land. Occasionally, though at rare intervals, a little line of locust-trees, looking like rocks in the great ocean of grass, mark where pools of water may be found, while here and there church spires rise in the distance, surrounded by white patches of houses, the homes of the cultivators of 53 this vast region. A large species of partridge or grouse appeared very abundant, and rose in flocks from the long grass at either side of the rail, or from the rich carpet of flowers on the margin of the corn fields. They sat on the fence almost unmoved by the rushing engine; and literally swarmed along the line. They are called prairie chickens by the people, and afford excellent sport.

Towards evening the train arrived at Alton, a town on the banks of a foggy-looking, shallow river, not much wider than the Thames at London bridge, with muddy, yellow sand banks, hemmed in on either side with the dark ruins of vegetation: this was the Mississippi, the Mecha—Chebe or father of waters as it is called in the Indian tongue; the great river which

drains a quarter of the world. The first feeling at the sight of this world-famed river was one of disappointment, but a moment's thought enabled one to feel that the Mississippi at Alton was the great Mississippi still.

Alton is some 1200 miles from the mouth of the river, a river navigable for great steam boats 800 miles above Alton: what more need be said of a stream than that great boats can traverse its waters for a length of more than 2000 miles. Some few miles from Alton is its junction with the great stream of the Missouri, when the river widens out into a grand delta, and forces its way through those ever shifting banks of sand which choke its mouth; it is in consequence of these that the steamers are built to float in such a trifling depth of 54 water, that it is said by Americans they can go any where where there is a heavy dew.

The station for St. Louis is on the eastern bank of the river, in the State of Illinois; the town itself being in the State of Missouri. The station is not good enough for a good shed in England, though here doing duty as an important passenger depôt. Like all else in America, especially in the western States, everything is constructed to meet an immediate pressing want, and this must be met in any way, however rough; there is no attempt to go beyond it for the time. There is a want of labour throughout the continent, and a want of time to carry out its gigantic business, and thus you everywhere see a mimimum of means applied to bring abont a maximum of results. In America, especially in the Western States, every town you come to is as perfect a fac simile of the town you left behind as the circumstances of site and ground will allow. You have everywhere the same fourth and fifth street, at right angles with Washington and Madison Avenue, the private houses are all one model, the hotels only differ in their degree of dirt and discomfort. I will not therefore attempt to describe the cities through which I passed on my journey from St. Louis to New York, but will merely give a few characteristics of them and the people who inhabit them.

Whatever may be said of the industry and business-like habits of this people, I should say that loafing as it is called is, especially in the west, the normal state 55 of American life.

The crowds which beset the Planters House at St. Louis or the Burnet House at Cincinnati, are something portentous. In the evening and at post time, the gatherings would be natural enough, for the hotel is the news bazaar, the field for political discussion: but at all hours of the day it is an universal lounge, the very home of the great hulking fellows, doing nothing but sitting upon two chairs, with their feet upon their window ledge, high above their noses. There is no friendly chat, not even chaff or banter among them. There they sit for hours, chewing tobacco, yawning, loafing, spitting. I never saw anything half so dull or so listless, such a miserable killing of time as I witnessed daily in the halls, parlours, bars, office, divan and barbers shop of an American hotel. Sound and extensive education is very unfrequent, nearly all the people are to a certain extent educated, that is, they can read and write, but intellectual life under such circumstances is almost altogether out of the question.

On the road from St. Louis to Cincinnati we passed through numerous camps; the siege of Vicksburgh being then in progress, these served as a base of operation and supplies. There was no appearance of military order or discipline about them, though they were guarded by sentries and cannon, and implements of war and soldiers accoutrements were abundant. Some of the sentries carried their rifles 56 under their arms like umbrellas, others carried the butt over the shoulder and the muzzle downwards, some of them had stuck the bayonet of the rifle into the ground and, chin in hand, were leaning their elbows on the stock, others less ingenious had deposited their muskets against the trees and were lying down reading newspapers. Some of them were good enough materials for working into soldiers, but the majority were either too old or too young; and it was not uncommon to see a grey-headed, white-bearded old man standing next to a boy who could hardly shoulder his rifle. Besides this, there was no attempt at sizing the men, and you would frequently see a tall six foot lath of a Yankee standing next to a mannikin, who in our service would be rejected as undersized.

Cincinnati will always be in my mind a synonym for pigs, a species of animal which abound there in such numbers as to make it generally known by the derisive title of Porkopolis.

As American bacon is imported into this country in great quantities, perhaps a short account of the slaughter houses there will not be deemed uninteresting. The pigs are turned into a dark covered yard, out of which there is a long narrow passage, with a window at the end and a trap-door under it, communicating with the slaughter-house below. Piggy being of an enquiring turn of mind, at once makes for the light of the window, but when he arrives there is greeted by a stab behind the shoulder which, under the practised 57 hand of the operator concealed from view, immediately proves fatal, and he falls through the trap-door where he is seized by the butchers below, cleaned, cut-up, and salted, and made ready to be sent off to different parts of the world. In less time than I have taken to describe it half a dozen pigs will have paid the penalty of their inquisitiveness with their lives.

From Cincinnati I went to Pittsburgh, a town on the Ohio, with the exception of Birmingham, the most sooty, dirty town I have ever been in, the centre of the coal and iron districts in the States: from this I wished to get to Baltimore, by the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, as my curiosity had been excited by a gentleman who arrived by that line, and told me the Confederate pickets were in sight for some distance along the track, but later in the day a telegram came in to say that they had torn up the rails and that it was impassible. I therefore went by the Pittsburgh and Harrisburgh line, and was richly repaid for my disappointment by the magnificence of the scenery. The route lay up and across the Alleghany mountains, probably the most difficult one for a railway that ever was attempted. For a few miles after leaving the town, the view was neither rich looking nor picturesque, the fields being clothed with huge black smoky mounds which marked the shafts of coal-pits, soon however, it entered a ravine between mountains, up a gorge clothed from base to summit with the densest foliage: this was the entrance which began the 58 ascent of the Alleghanies, and for many a long mile the engine puffed and toiled

up the incline, always shut in between the masses of wooded hills stretching above on each side like masses of feathered tapestry. At last it emerged from a gorgeous defile half-way up the summit, and a magnificent panorama burst on the view. Words would fail to give any idea of the combination of plain and mountain, hill and valley, river and meadow, forest and rock, wild tracts through which the Indian roamed but a few years ago: lands covered with the richest crops: rugged passes such as a painter would have peopled with shadowy groups of bandits; gentle sylvan glades such as he would have covered with waving corn. Over scenes such as these, and many besides, the eye glances when looking from that enchanted spot. The descent from this is so steep that, even with the breaks on, the train slides down almost at full speed; at one incline with two awfully sudden curves, the way descends ninety-six feet in a little more than a mile. Arriving at Harrisburgh we found the town in an intense state of excitement, as General Ewell's column was within twenty miles of the place, and the sound of distant cannonading could occasionally be heard. It was full of troops, principally raw militia recruits, who were busily engaged fortifying the hills which surround the town. The inhabitants were in the most absurd state of alarm, instead of organizing themselves to defend their homes and property, they were running away in 59 shoals, and those who did stay were endeavouring to make their fortunes by charging the soldiers who had come from long distances to defend them, double prices for everything they required. Finding there was no chance of the Confederates being near the place for some time, I took the train for New York, where I arrived after a long and tedious journey, having travelled nearly 4,000 miles by steamer and railroad in little over a month.

What struck me most forcibly during my travels was the sensitiveness of the people, especially with regard to English opinion. It is the only power in Europe for which they really seem to care, and with respect to her there is a morbid feeling which neither can be explained or justified. Let any French, Russian or Austrian journal write what it pleases of the United States, it is received with indifferent criticism, or callous head shaking. But let a London paper speak, and the whole American press is furious or delighted. I fear the

history of the people, and tendency of their institutions, are adverse to any hope of fair play and justice to the old country. The general result of my intercourse with Americans, is the impression that, although personally they like Englishmen, they consider Great Britain in a state of corruption and decay, and eagerly seek to exalt France or Russia, at her expense. The language is the sole link between England and the United States, and it alone binds the two people at the present day.

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After a short stay in New York I left for Canada by the same route I had traversed some months previous, only as it was now summer the magnificent scenery of the Hudson and the lakes could be seen to their fullest advantage. This mighty river is for the first few miles after leaving New York, hemmed in by lofty cliffs called the Palisades, which, striped with thin red and black strata, look like colored palings erected by nature to keep within bounds the stream which pours so grandly beneath. But its real beauty is higher up, where a spur of the Alleghanies comes down upon the flood: at every turn you think you are coming to the source of the river, for the mountains close in on every side, but every turn discloses fresh beauties: crags and rocks keep opening out: here a large island rising in terraces of granite, next a chain of smaller ones clad in the richest green, and seeming a link between the river and the lofty wooded mountains on either side.

Westpoint, about half way up the river, both from the charms of its scenery, its historical associations, and its famous military academy, is one of the most interesting places in the States: it was the scene of several contests in the war of independence, and it was near here that the unfortunate Major Andrè was hung as a spy. Albany is the next place of importance, and here leaving the steamer I went by train and stage coach to Lake George; from this lovely spot the whole way to Montreal is as full of objects of historical interest as of beautiful scenery; but as I am 61 afraid of wearying you with too many descriptions, I pass over that portion of my journey, and in taking a final farewell of the States, although in the beginning of my lecture I said that it was not my intention to touch upon the causes of the civil war, I lately came across a passage in the *Quarterly Review* bearing so admirably

on the subject, that I cannot refrain giving it to you. It is from an article on “New Englanders and the Old Home,” and it runs thus, “Wordsworth “told Mr. Emerson (a famous American author) thirty “years ago that the Americans needed a civil war to “teach the necessity of knitting the social tie stronger, “and whatever the result may be, the war has come. “Their character as well as their institutions are on “their trial. The only real test that has probed it to “its heart is now presented to it. Its qualities, good “and bad, are gathered together upon the threshing “floor of fate, where the flails are beating fiercely to “separate the wheat from the straw, and the storm “winds are blowing mightily to winnow the chaff from “the grain. We wish them well through the purifying “process, and hope they may emerge a better nation “of nobler men, with simpler manners, greater reverence, “higher aim, and a lower tone of talk, as will “inevitably follow the living of a more unselfish life “and the doing of a more earnest work.”

My time was now drawing to a close, but before leaving the country I had an opportunity of seeing something of bush life as well as of participating in 62 the sport of salmon fishing. Leaving Montreal, our party steamed down the St. Lawrence about 300 miles, to the mouth of the Sagueny, one of the most remarkable rivers in the world: it is in fact more an arm of the sea than a river, as the tide runs up it for a distance of sixty miles; it is of a uniform width of about a mile and a-half, hemmed in on either side by solid walls of perpendicular rock varying from 1,200 to 1,500 feet in height. We steamed for a distance of about twenty miles up the river, and disembarked at the mouth of a smaller stream which runs into it called the St. Marguerite, up this we proceeded for the distance of about twenty miles, our tents, baggage, and provisions being carried in canoes propelled by Indians or French Canadians. When we arrived at our camping ground, we pitched our tents, and formed our camp; and for three weeks led a wild pleasant kind of life, entirely separated from the rest of the world, and chiefly depending on the produce of our rods and guns for food. The sport was excellent, but the great drawbacks were the musquitoes and flies, which defied all precautions in the way of veils to keep them out. However it was a very fascinating kind of life, and it was with great regret that we broke up our camp and

once more returned to civilization, in order to be in time to catch the steamer from Quebec to Liverpool.

My duties as a guide are now at an end. I will not weary you by an account of our homeward voyage 63 which was unmarked by any incident to vary the monotony of twelve days at sea. I am fully aware that the subject which I have attempted to handle this evening is one of such magnitude, and contains so many topics of interest at the present day, that it would be impossible to do it justice in a dozen such lectures as the present, but I hope at a future period to supplement this discourse by some remarks upon a few of the considerations arising out of it: for the present nothing remains for me but to thank you for your kind attention and your indulgence to the many short-comings with which I am sensible this lecture abounds.

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